LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

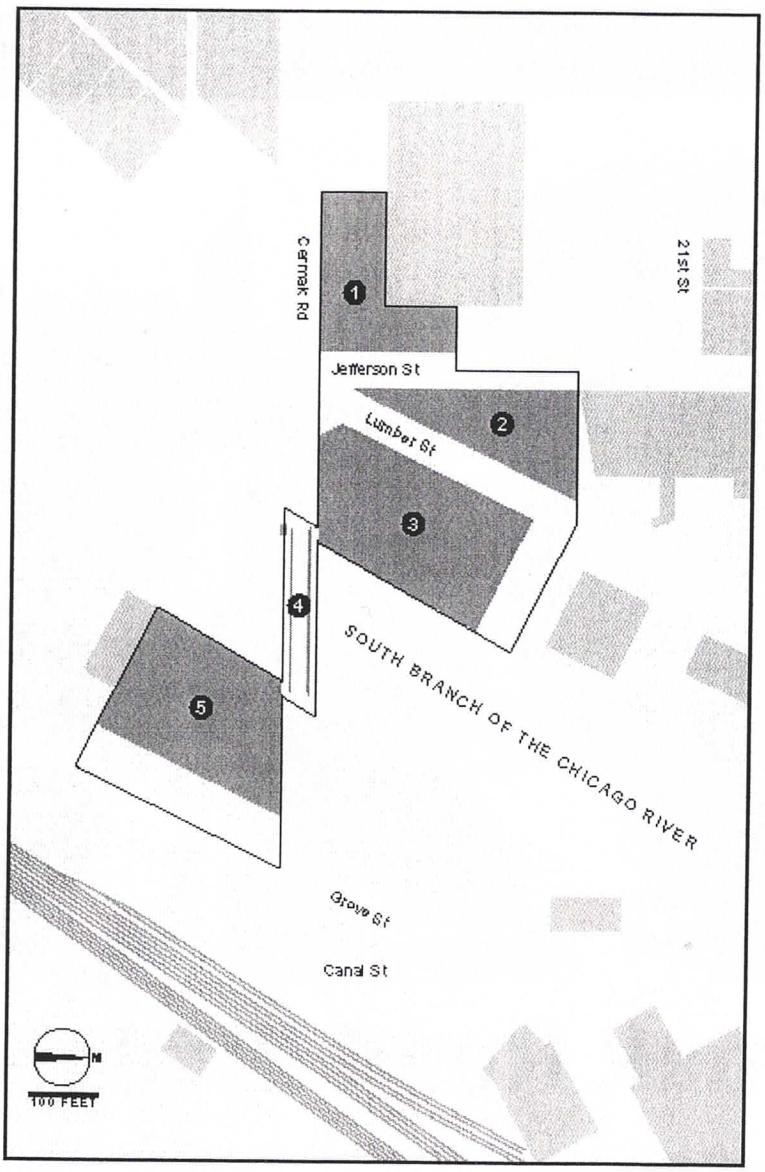
Cermak Road Bridge District

Cermak Road, Predominately Between Grove and Jefferson Streets

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, May 1, 2003

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Lori T. Healey, Commissioner



Cover: The Cermak Road Bridge District consists of the City's finest intact ensemble of riverfront industrial buildings grouped around the last remaining double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge in operation in Chicago.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and the City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

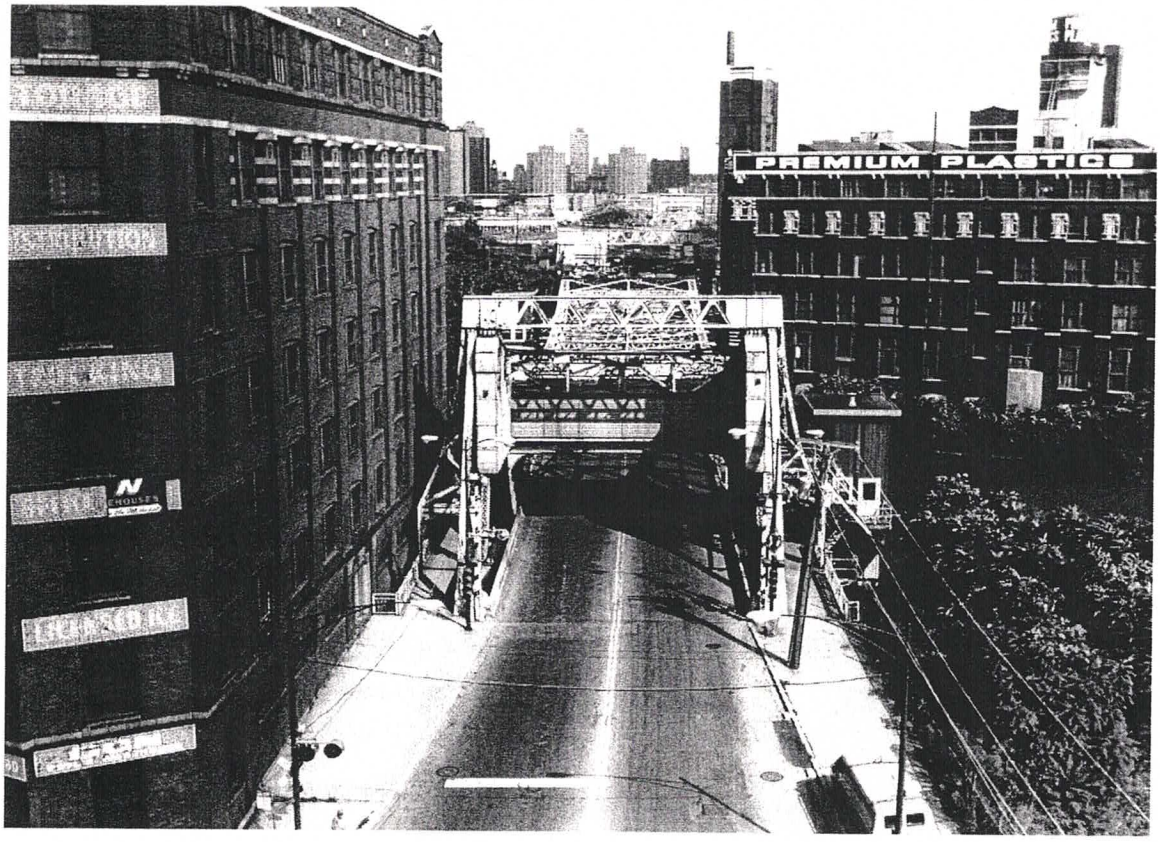
Cermak Road Bridge District

Cermak Road, predominately between Grove Street and Jefferson Street

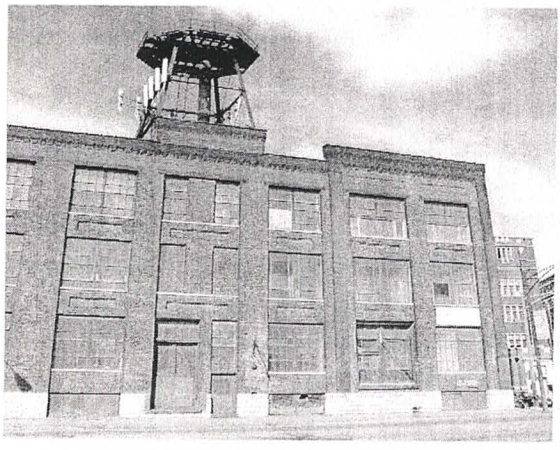
Period of Significance: 1901-1924

The Cermak Road Bridge District, located along Cermak Road and the South Branch of the Chicago River on Chicago's Lower West Side, is a significant ensemble of riverfront industrial buildings grouped around the city's sole-surviving double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge. Encouraged by the completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 and the construction of the Chicago & Alton Railroad in the 1850s, industrial development along the Chicago River began in earnest and had grown exponentially by the end of the nineteenth century. As a pivotal point for maritime traffic as well as the crossroads of railroad routes, Chicago's location gave the merchants and manufacturers who established operations along the river a great advantage.

By 1900, newly-dredged slips and private rail sidings prompted an expansion of the city's industrial district beyond the Loop with merchants and manufacturers building huge warehouses and factories along the banks of the North and South branches of the river, including the buildings in the Cermak Road Bridge District. Together the buildings and bridge of the Cermak Road Bridge District form the finest intact grouping of an industrial riverfront precinct in the city, commemorating the importance of the interconnected river and rail network that criss-crossed the city to the development of Chicago. The structures in the Cermak Road Bridge District also reflect Chicago's vital role as a central depot that quickly evolved into the preeminent distribution center for the western United States. As a ready supply of raw materials flowed into the city and an uninterrupted stream of manufactured goods were shipped out to every region of the United States, Chicago gained the reputation as a national center of commerce.



The Cermak Road Bridge District is the city's finest intact ensemble of riverfront industrial buildings grouped around the city's sole-surviving double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge. Above: A view of the Thomson & Taylor Spice Co. Building at 500 W. Cermak Rd. (left), the Cermak Road Bridge (center), and the Hoyt Building at 465 W. Cermak Rd. (right).



Above left: Built in 1901, the Wendnagel & Company Warehouse at 2146 S. Jefferson St. is the oldest of the district's four buildings. Above right: The Western Shade Cloth Co. Building at 2141 S. Jefferson St. anchors the corner of Lumber and Jefferson Streets.

Industry and Commerce in Nineteenth-Century Chicago

Chicago grew from a small village established in 1833 to a city of 1.7 million residents by 1900, a rate of growth that astonished period observers. Two significant factors in that growth, especially in terms of the city's position as an industrial and commercial giant, were geography and transportation. Although originally swampy and unprepossessing in appearance, Chicago's location on the southwestern edge of Lake Michigan was an exceptional one in terms of transportation potential.

Before the widespread construction of railroads in the mid-nineteenth century, water transportation was the cheapest, fastest and most reliable means of transportation available in the United States. The Great Lakes had been connected to the Atlantic Ocean in 1825 with the opening of the Erie Canal, and this extensive natural and manmade waterway had become a critical route for the transportation of raw materials from Western mines, forests, and farms to Eastern cities such as New York, and the subsequent reverse-route of manufactured goods back to the West.

Chicago was located where this great internal seaway came closest to the network of waterways that constituted the Mississippi River basin. A natural "portage," or land transfer, existed between the Chicago River, flowing into Lake Michigan, and the Des Plaines River, which eventually flowed into the Mississippi. Early on in Chicago's history, settlers saw the potential of a canal linking the Great Lakes with the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi. This canal, the Illinois & Michigan (I & M) Canal, was opened in 1848.

The I & M Canal had hardly been opened, however, when railroads began to transform Chicago. Two decades before, on July 4, 1828, the first public railroad in the United States, the Baltimore & Ohio, had its first run. Early railroads radiated out from Eastern cities at first, but in 1848 the first Chicago railroad began operation, running the short distance between Chicago and Oak Park. By 1856 Chicago was the focus of ten trunk lines with approximately 3,000 miles of track. To access to the downtown warehouses and factories along the river, trains entered the city from the south on rails that ran along the lakefront. During the next three decades, new railroad lines connected Chicago with the rest of the country, and with the aggressive support of the city's businessmen and government leaders, the city soon became America's railroad hub.

Factories, warehouses, lumber yards, and stock yards all clustered in and near Chicago during the second half of the nineteenth century, making the city a manufacturing and wholesale center for the United States. These industrial and commercial enterprises initially tended to be located near the easy transportation of both water and rail. The Chicago River, including both North and South branches, soon became an important nexus for such commerce as railroad lines and spurs spread out along the river's banks, connecting docks and riverside factories and warehouses with the country's ever-growing railroad network. Raw materials were brought into the city by either water or rail, transformed into finished goods through manufacturing, then shipped by rail and water to consumers.

Contemporary photographs from the 1860s through 1900 show the intensely commercial uses to which the Chicago River was originally put. The river was full of ships, passing by industrial buildings of varying sizes and complexity. Raw materials of all sorts were brought to warehouses and storage yards along the river, including lumber, metal ores, and grain. Near the Lake Michigan shore, grandly-scaled warehouses to house grain were built on the south bank of the river, at the terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad. On the north bank of the river, east of today's North Michigan Avenue, stood Cyrus McCormick's reaper factory where iron ore was shaped into mass-produced farm equipment.

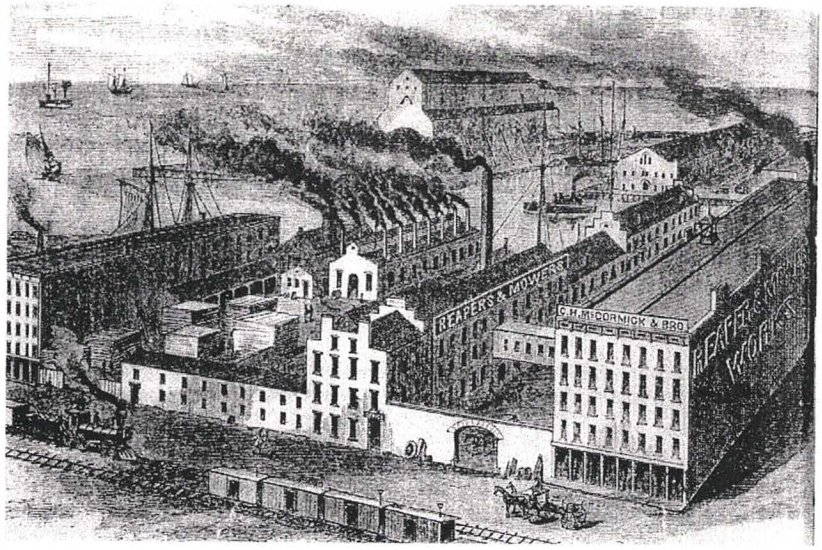
One of the most significant uses of the riverfront, in sheer acreage, was for lumber storage. Chicago was the lumber capital of the Midwest, with over 1 billion board feet of lumber brought to the city and processed in 1880. The South Branch of the river, both north and south of the Cermak Road Bridge District, was especially devoted to lumber yards where timber from surrounding states such as Michigan and Wisconsin was sorted, stored, dried, and reconfigured into lots to be shipped to retailers and builders throughout the Midwest.

The land that is part of the Cermak Road Bridge District, although surrounded by lumber yards, remained largely unused through the mid-1880s. Robinson's fire insurance atlas of 1886 shows that the only building built within the boundaries of the district was a warehouse for the Alton Rail Company, located on the future site of the W. M. Hoyt Co. building at 465 W. Cermak Rd.

The peak years for the Chicago lumber trade were in the 1880s and early 1890s, ending in 1892. With the exhaustion of lumber supplies reachable by water and rail from Chicago, the city's dominance as the lumber capital of the United States began to wane. Cheaper yellow pine from forests in Georgia and other southern states began to take preeminence, and lumber brought into Chicago in the early twentieth century was predominantly for local consumption for housing and other construction.

As lumber yards along the South Branch closed in the 1890s and early 1900s, land adjacent to the river remained attractive for warehouses and factories. At the same time, increasing land values were forcing wholesalers and manufacturers out of downtown Chicago. Early in Chicago's history, during the 1830s through 1860s, the area now known as the Loop had housed a wide variety of land uses, including residential, governmental, retail, wholesale, and manufacturing. Even after the Fire of 1871 and into the 1890s, the established retail and office area of downtown Chicago, centered along Michigan Avenue and State, Dearborn, and LaSalle Streets, was flanked to the north and west by warehouse districts devoted to wholesale, warehouse and light manufacturing uses. The most famous of these was the wholesale food district along South Water Street, just south of and parallel to the Chicago River between Michigan and the South Branch of the Chicago River.

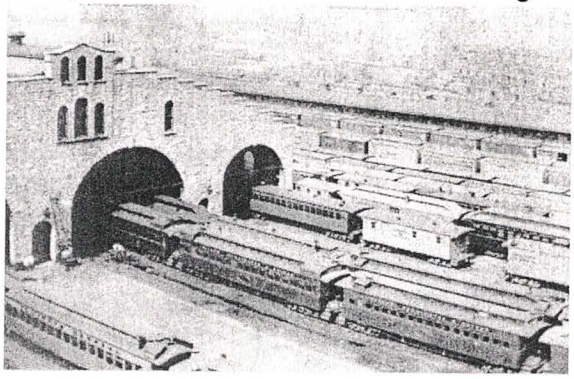
This "girdle" of factories and warehouses had increasingly become an impediment to downtown real estate growth by 1900. Manufacturers and wholesale companies were encouraged, first through free-market real estate practice, then through the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* (which



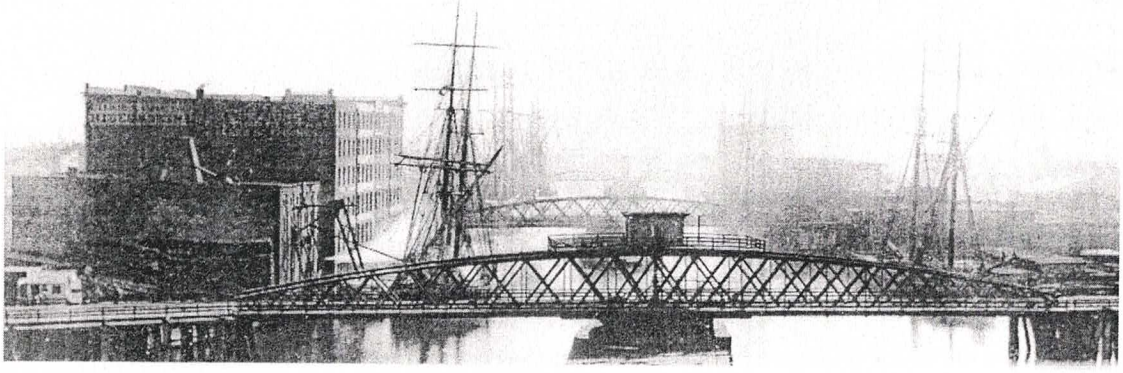
Due to the city's excellent rail and water connections, factories, warehouses and industrial buildings dominated the banks of the river in the second half of the 19th century. Above: In the 1860s the McCormick Reaper Works was located on the north bank of the river, just east of today's North Michigan Avenue.

Left: Canal barges, schooners and railways converge at the forks of the river near Randolph Street. In 1871, lumberyards occupied nearly ten miles of river frontage.

Right: By the mid-1860s, the Illinois Central Terminal, located east of what is now Randolph St. and Michigan Avenue, was operating at full capacity, handling both passenger and freight traffic.



Bottom: The Lake and Randolph Street bridges are seen here in the mid-1860s. Land travel was often delayed by the cumbersome swing bridges which pivoted on a center pier to provide a narrow passage for ships.



brought about the redevelopment of the south bank of the Chicago River for Wacker Drive), to sell their downtown properties and move elsewhere in the city.

Consequently, due to the abundance of low cost land and the proliferation of railroads, lumber yards, factories, elevators, warehouses, docks and depots that once lined the river downtown pushed north and south along both branches. By 1900, four major rail lines (the Chicago & Alton, the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne & Chicago, the Chicago & Western Indiana, and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe) ran along the South Branch of the river through area surrounding Cermak Road. Many of the industrial buildings constructed in the Cermak Road Bridge District had slips and private rail sidings to allow them to take advantage of the interconnected network of water and rail transportation that converged in the area.

It was during this period, from 1901 to 1924, that the four buildings in the Cermak Road Bridge District, as well as the Cermak Road Bridge, were built. Two of the buildings housed companies previously located in this wholesale-manufacturing section of downtown Chicago, the W. M. Hoyt Co. and the Thomson & Taylor Spice Company, which moved to new buildings in the district in 1909 and 1911, respectively. These companies could build new modern buildings here for relatively modest sums. For example, Thomson & Taylor built their seven-story building for $350,000.

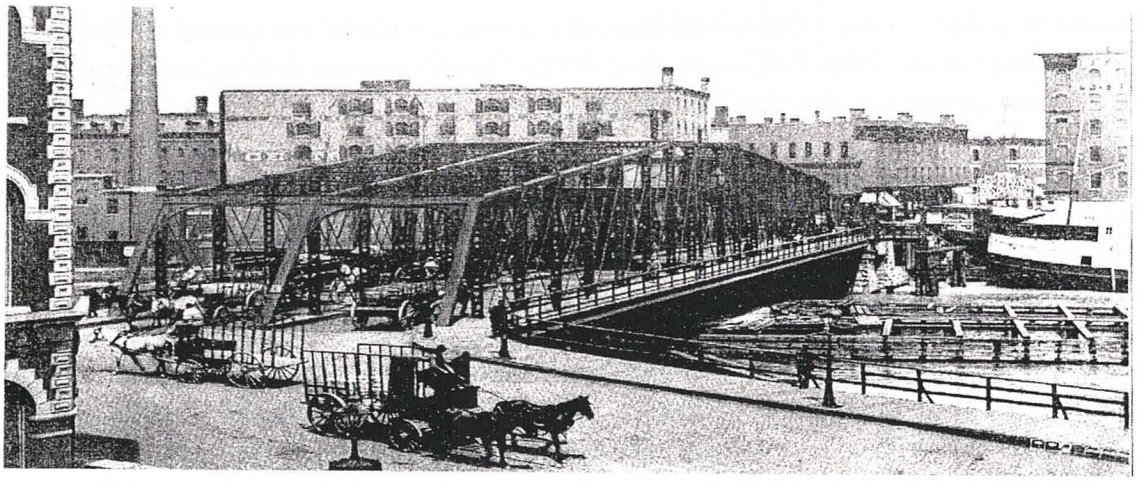
Both of these companies were wholesale grocers, dealing with food stuffs such as canned food, spices, and coffee. *Chicago and its Makers*, a history of Chicago published in 1929, noted that wholesale grocers were a significant part of Chicago's important wholesale trade and commented on the general geographic and transportation advantages possessed by Chicago:

> From the day the very first settlers came to what is now the city of Chicago, the place was a central depot, a distributing center, of provisions. Its location at the head of navigation on the Great Lakes, and the crossroads of the routes followed by the coureurs du bois, gave it great advantage over all other points.

Companies such as W. H. Hoyt and Thomson & Taylor were suppliers to small grocers and general stores throughout the Midwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, taking advantage of Chicago's central location and excellent transportation connections, both by water and rail, to the rest of the United States.

Factory and Warehouse Architecture in the Cermak Road Bridge District

The Cermak Road Bridge District is a significant grouping of riverfront industrial buildings, reflecting the history of the Chicago River as an important spine of industrial and warehouse activity. In its heyday as a center of commerce, the river was lined with a variety of factory and warehouse buildings of varying sizes, configurations, and architectural styles, representing the progression of industrial architectural design in Chicago throughout the nineteenth and early



Above: In 1890 the Rush Street Bridge was one of the city's busiest bridges. During this time warehouse districts lined both sides of the Main Branch of the river.

Left: Before establishing its operations at 465 W. Cermak Rd., the W.M. Hoyt wholesale grocery house was headquartered in this building that stood on what is now the London Guarantee Building (360 N. Michigan Avenue).

Bottom: The South Water Street produce market is shown here. The bustling market which was south of and parallel to the Chicago River between Michigan Avenue and the South Branch of the river was relocated in 1925 to make way for Wacker Drive.

twentieth centuries. Most of these buildings have been destroyed for more recent development. The buildings found within the Cermak Road Bridge District represent the best surviving cluster of riverfront industrial architecture remaining in Chicago.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century industrial architecture in Chicago, including that found in the District, was typical of industrial buildings found in other industrial cities in the United States. The buildings in the district are multi-story loft buildings with brick exteriors covering interiors supported by either metal or concrete frames. They were designed with wide-open interior floors meant to provide companies the greatest degree of flexibility in the use of interior space. Such interiors permitted either light manufacture or warehouse uses within the same general envelope of space. Being adjacent to railroad lines and, in the case of the W. M. Hoyt and Thomson & Taylor Company buildings, the South Branch of the Chicago River, buildings within the district had easy access to means of transportation for the goods housed or manufactured in them.

As buildings built for starkly utilitarian uses, the buildings in the district have architectural styles that are simple and direct, with relatively little applied ornament. The visual appeal of these buildings rests with the straightforward use of materials, including colors and textures, as well as the simple overall architectural expression. This is especially true of the Wendnagel & Company Warehouse at 2120-36 S. Jefferson, the oldest building in the district, built in two stages in 1901 and 1906, with its common-brick walls ornamented with simple coffered spandrels and corbeled roof parapet.

The three later buildings in the district show greater efforts towards decorative embellishment. All three have chamfered corners that provide dramatic massing that takes advantage of the non-rectilinear street patterns found in the district, created in response to the slightly northeast-southwest orientation of the Chicago River. The Thomson & Taylor Spice Company Building at 500 W. Cermak Rd., built in 1911, also uses dramatic massing and contrasting limestone details used for lintels and window details. The Western Shade Cloth Company Building at the intersection of Lumber and Jefferson Streets and Cermak Road, combines the visual drama of its "flatiron" site with simplified Collegiate Gothic details, including multiple windows grouped within rectilinear stone surrounds. The W. M. Hoyt Building at 465 W. Cermak Rd., built in 1909, is the most high-style, elaborately detailed building within the district, utilizing dramatic Prairie-style stone ornament around the building's main entrance and just under its rooftop parapet as well as in its pier and spandrel expression. Individually, these buildings are handsome examples of early twentieth-century Chicago industrial architecture. Taken as a group, they are exceptional in their ability to visually express an almost-vanished aspect of Chicago's historic industrial streetscapes.

Left: A contemporary view of the Western Shade Cloth Company Building (left) and the Thomson & Taylor Spice Company Building located at the corner of Lumber Street and Cermak Road in the Cermak Road Bridge District.

Below: A historic view of the district looking northeast. The Thomson & Taylor Building (left), the Cermak Road Bridge, and the Hoyt Building (right) are seen in this photo from 1940. Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge 458, a vertical lift bridge constructed in 1915, is seen in the distance. The bridge is located just south of 18th Street and east of Canal Street.

Bridges and the Chicago River

Since its earliest days, bridges have been vital to the commercial and industrial growth of Chicago. By enabling land and water transportation to circulate through the same area with relatively little interference, bridges facilitated the smooth transportation of raw materials and manufactured goods through the area and were especially important to the development of the industrial and manufacturing operations along the river. Even as the city and the river grew together and made each other great, however, a tension existed between them. While the river brought business and industry to the city, its Y-shape with branches running north and south often made land traffic a challenge.

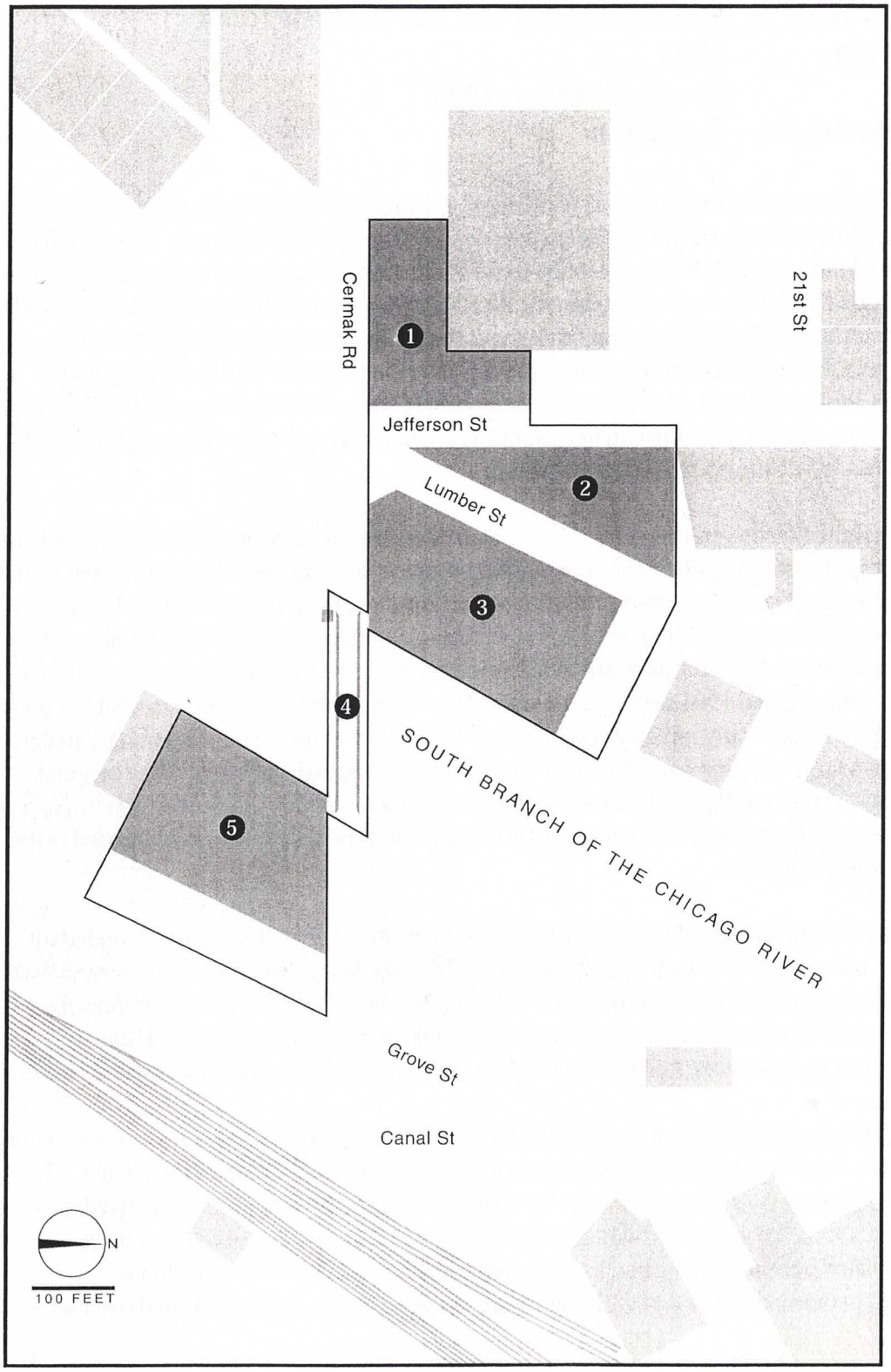
Developments in bridge design in Chicago was an evolutionary process that began in 1831 with the construction of the city's first bridge, a span that was privately funded for the purpose of providing citizens a means of crossing the north branch of the river to patronize a tavern on the east bank. This bridge, however, was not moveable, so no ships of any size were able to pass. The advantage of a bridge that would allow people and horses to pass and could quickly be moved out of the way for boats was quickly recognized.

The city's first movable bridge was built in 1834 at Dearborn Street. A menace to river navigation, the wooden drawbridge which once was stuck open for two days was demolished in 1839. Other movable bridges followed, including floating bridges (which were hinged to the river bank on one end and floated on a pontoon on the other end), swing bridges (which rotated on a center pier), jack-knife bridges (which were hinged at two places on each leaf and folded back toward the bank) and vertical lift bridges (massive structures whose span was raised by mechanisms housed in towers that stood on either side of the river). Designing an efficient and somewhat aesthetically pleasing movable bridge was a challenge for designers and engineers.

In 1893, William Scherzer patented a bridge design that showed a lot of promise. It was a "rolling lift" bridge, a two-leafed bridge that worked like facing rocking chairs that rocked back away from each other leaving a clear space between. The Cermak Road Bridge is the only remaining double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift Bridge in Chicago. Constructed in 1906, the bridge continues to be owned and operated by the city. This early movable bridge was the first of two types of bascule bridges to be erected in Chicago, and it was an important predecessor to the Chicago type trunnion bascule bridges that today are a familiar sight along the Chicago River and around the world.

Cermak Bridge District Map

This map is provided for illustrative purposes only. If designated by the City Council, the district will be defined by its legal description. Map numbers refer to Building Catalog entries.



Building Catalog

1. Wendnagel & Company Warehouse
2130-46 S. Jefferson Street/600 W. Cermak Road
Date: 1901
North Addition, 1906
Architect: Unknown

In 1901, the *Economist* reported that Wendnagel & Company began the construction of a three-story brick factory on the northwest corner of 22nd and Jefferson Streets. Specializing in the manufacture of brewers' vats, wooden tanks and fire protection tanks that sat atop many of the rooftops of buildings throughout the city, Wendnagel enjoyed a thriving business. As building construction boomed in Chicago and throughout the Midwest, so too did the demand for Wendnagel's fire protection tanks. Consequently, just five years after the completion of its factory on Jefferson Street, the company made plans to expand the building. In 1906, a three-story addition, carefully crafted to match the design, details and materials of the original building, was constructed on the north side of the factory.

Both the original factory building and the 1906 addition are constructed of brown brick set atop a raised base of rusticated limestone. The building displays its simple but fine craftsmanship in its solid brickwork. Details include recessed spandrel panels and a parapet decorated with a stepped brick pattern resembling dentils. The building's straightforward design is enhanced by quality materials such as limestone sills and rust-colored face brick which accents the vertical piers. Both the original 1901 factory building and the 1906 addition possess excellent integrity and have experienced only minor changes such as the infill of some window openings. In the late 1990s, a large addition constructed of white metal was added to the rear of the original factory and the 1906 addition. This modern addition, which is setback and clearly distinguished from the historic portions of the factory by it color and building materials, is not included in the boundaries of the district.

According to company advertisements from 1908, Wendnagel & Company was founded in 1856. The company's first factory was located at ***792-794 State Street*** and the business was managed by its founder, Louis Wendnagel. An advertisement from the *Lakeside Classified Directory* of 1911 states that the company erected tanks anywhere in the United States, including: rectangular tanks, milk vats, roof tanks, vinegar, pickle, brewery and distillery tanks.

By 1914, Wendnagel & Company maintained its operations in the original portion of the factory on Jefferson Street and began leasing space in the north addition to commercial tenants. The *Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map* for 1914 shows that the building also housed two tenants, the Orr & Lockett Hardware Company and C. Creator's & Company. Orr & Lockett, whose advertising slogan was "Chicago's Representative Hardware House," specialized in the manufacture of tools, hardware, refrigerators, dumb-waiters and contractors' supplies.

Chicago has been at the center of the hardware trade since its early history when the primary means of distributing goods was by water. Unlike other lines of business, the hardware industry continued to use the river as a means of shipping throughout the 1920s. Orr & Lockett, who primarily used the warehouse as a storage facility, would have taken advantage of the location near the river and to rail lines to import and distribute its products. Additionally, the factory's central location provided convenient access to Orr & Lockett's retail outlet which was located in the Loop at *71-73 Randolph Street*.

Similar to other companies in the food industry which were located in the district, C. Creator & Company, the other tenant in the Wendnagel factory, produced and distributed roasted peanuts. Other food-related companies included wholesale grocers W.M. Hoyt & Company, located at 465 W. Cermak, and the Thomson & Taylor Spice Company at 500 W. Cermak Road. These companies also benefitted from their close proximity to Chicago's railroad network which offered an efficient means of shipping their products to markets throughout the United States.

WOOD
TANKS
STEEL
TOWERS
FOR
Water Supply and Fire Protection
We erect tanks and towers in Chicago or anywhere in the United States; any size up to 100,000 Gallons. Roof tanks and roof tank repairs. Rectangular tanks; milk vats; vinegar, pickle, brewery and distillery tanks, and tanks for all purposes. WE DO ONLY HIGH GRADE WORK
Established 1856
Get the Benefit of our Experience
Wendnagel & Co.
22nd and Jefferson Sts.

Left: An advertisement for Wendnagel & Company from the 1909 *Chicago Central Business and Office Building Directory*.

Bottom: The southeast portion of the Wendnagel Warehouse (left) was constructed in 1901. In 1906, the warehouse was expanded with six bays to the north.

2. The Western Shade Cloth Company Building
2141 S. Jefferson Street
Date: 1924
Architect: Lockwood Greene & Co.

Completed in 1924, the Western Shade Cloth Company Building was the last of district's four industrial buildings to be constructed. This triangular four- and five-story red brick building was designed by the architectural firm of Lockwood Greene & Co. The highly symmetrical building is articulated by four-story vertical piers with geometric limestone capitals. Other ornamental features include limestone detailing consisting of window surrounds, stringcourses and copings.

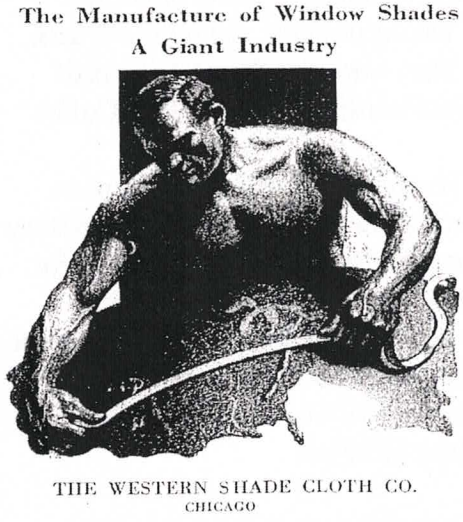
The building is marked by a five-story tower on the Cermak Road facade, which anchors the building on its triangular lot. A one story entrance foyer projects from the base of the tower. Designed with a castellated parapet, the projecting entry gives the industrial building a refined character. The rich red brick entry is accentuated by a grey limestone surround which frames the doorway and transom window. The words "Western Shade Cloth Company" are inscribed above the window. Above the entry, four narrow windows topped by transoms and framed by limestone surrounds are situated on the second, third and fourth stories of the tower. Multiple limestone stringcourses distinguish the top of the tower, which is further accented by a grouping of three narrow windows which is also set in a limestone frame. Geometric limestone pendants flank the windows on the tower's fifth story. The parapet of the tower features a limestone stringcourse of simplified geometric ornament.

As is common in the evolution of industrial buildings, the Western Shade Cloth Company Building was expanded a number of times to accommodate the functional needs of the business. Its four and five story factory stretches north to an unadorned two story warehouse. This two story wing, which extends along the northwest side of the triangular site, was constructed at the same time as the four- and five- story portion of the building. Unlike the corner portion of the factory, which retains a high degree of integrity, the two story wing has experienced significant alterations. This portion plus four annexes and additions to the rear of the building that were constructed along the northeast portion of the site are located outside the boundaries of the district.

Little is known about the building's architects, Lockwood Greene & Company. The firm, whose office was located at 38 S. Dearborn Street, primarily designed manufacturing buildings in Chicago. Another known surviving building by Lockwood Greene & Company is the Egyptian Lacquer Manufacturing Co. Building, designed in 1926 in the Egyptian Revival style, located in the East Garfield Park neighborhood at 3052 W. Carroll Avenue. This one-story building features exuberant details including a scarab ornament over the entrance and decorative friezes, which surround the door.

The Western Shade Cloth Company which manufactured cloth shades and window treatments also had an enormous presence in the area surrounding the district. Its milling operation was housed in a factory building at 2100 S. Jefferson Street (now demolished) and was connected

to the extant building by means of an enclosed foot bridge on the second floor. An undated promotional brochure, possibly from the mid-1910s, entitled *Complete Book of Window Shades*, states that the Western Shade Cloth factory was the largest window shade factory in the world, with a manufacturing capacity of more than 10,000 yards of window shading per hour. "The annual production is more than 10,000 miles of shade cloth–enough to span the continent from New York to San Francisco three times."



Left: The logo of the Western Shade Cloth Company from the company's promotional brochure entitled the *Complete Book of Windows Shades*.

Right: A contemporary view of the Western Shade Cloth Company Building at 2141 S. Jefferson Street looking northeast from Cermak Road.

3. Thomson & Taylor Spice Company Building
500 W. Cermak Road
Date: 1911
Architects: Chatten & Hammond

This massive industrial building was constructed in 1911 for the Thomson & Taylor Spice Company. As one of the City's earliest dealers of foodstuffs, Thomson & Taylor imported spices, coffees, and indigoes, and manufactured mustards, baking powders, flavoring extracts, dry and liquid spices, and ground hops, herbs and seeds. They were also the proprietors of household products and staples such as "Red Cross Lye and Potash" and "Gold Band Coffee."

The company was founded in Chicago just after the Civil War in 1865 by Alex M. Thomson, James E. Taylor, and George Thomson. By 1887, Thomson & Taylor occupied two four-story buildings located at 34-40 S. Water Street (now demolished) and had grown to be one of the largest importers and manufacturers of spices in the United States. The increasing success of the business prompted the company to construct an seven-story industrial building on the corner of Lake Street and Michigan Avenue (demolished) which served as the Thomson Taylor's headquarters until 1911 when it relocated to the emerging manufacturing district along 22nd Street (now Cermak Road) and the South Branch of the Chicago River.

Thomson & Taylor's seven-story red-brick manufacturing building anchors the northeastern corner of the intersection of Cermak Road and Lumber Street. Bordered to the east by the Chicago River, the angular building was built at a cost of $350,000 by the architectural firm of Chatten & Hammond according to *The Economist*. The imposing warehouse is ornamented with terra cotta crafted by the American Terra Cotta and Ceramic Company which articulates its base, shaft and capitals. Pilasters are capped with three horizontal bands of white glazed terra cotta and a white inset panel featuring an abstract geometric ornament. A terra cotta string course is situated above the pilasters and additional string courses stretch above and below the seventh floor windows. Parapets at the southeast and southwest corners of the building are further accentuated with simple terra cotta brackets and finely crafted brickwork.

During the time the warehouse was occupied by Thomson & Taylor, it housed every aspect of the spice manufacture process. Storage was located in the basement, shipping and receiving on the first floor, spice packing and a laboratory on the third floor, additional storage and coffee roasting and grinding on floors four, five and six, and packaging and rolling on the top floor.

The architectural firm of **Chatten & Hammond** designed factories and residences in Chicago and the Midwest and was founded in 1907 by **Melville Clarke Chatten (1873-1957)** and **Charles Herrick Hammond (1882-1969)**. After earning a degree in architecture from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1896, Melville Chatten practiced architecture with the firm of Frost & Granger from 1899 to 1905. C. Herrick Hammond graduated from the Armour Institute of Technology (now IIT) in 1904. Both traveled to Paris and studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts before returning to Chicago and establishing the firm. In addition to the Thomson & Taylor Building, Chatten & Hammond designed other factories in this near south

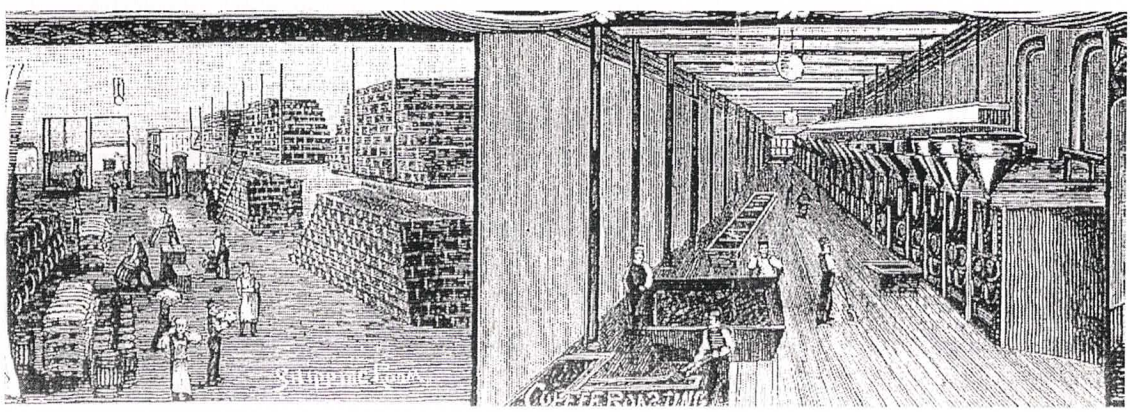
side manufacturing corridor including the Pure Carbonic Company Building (now demolished), which was once located on Canal Street and the River.

In 1925, prominent Chicago architect, Dwight H. Perkins (1867-1941) formed a partnership with Chatten & Hammond. The resulting firm, Perkins, Chatten & Hammond, is credited with the designs of homes and office buildings including the neighborhood skyscaper known as the Northwest Tower (1929) at 1608 N. Milwaukee in Wicker Park and the Art Deco-inspired Victor F. Lawson YMCA House (1930-34) at 30 W. Chicago Avenue in Near North.

Overall, the warehouse exhibits excellent integrity and has experienced relatively few changes since its construction. Minor alterations including window replacement and the enclosure of window openings have occurred on the building's east and elevations.

Right: The massive seven-story Thomson & Taylor Spice Company Building at 500 W. Cermak Road was constructed in 1911 to the design of architects Chatten & Hammond.

Bottom: A promotional advertisement for the Company announced that the building housed every aspect of the spice manufacture process under one roof. The shipping room and the coffee roasting process are illustrated in this rendering.



4. Cermak Road Bridge
Cermak Road and the South Branch of the Chicago River
Date: 1906
Principal Designer: William Scherzer
Chief Engineer: Isham Randolph

By enabling land and water transportation to circulate through the same area with relatively little interference, bridges have been vital to the commercial and industrial growth of Chicago. The Cermak Road Bridge facilitated the smooth transportation of raw materials and manufactured goods through the area and was especially important to the development of the industrial and manufacturing operations along the river. It continues to be significant today because it is the last remaining double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift Bridge in the city. Rolling lift bridges offered many advantages over the cumbersome swing bridges that they replaced, the most important of which was the absence of a center pier, thus allowing an unobstructed passage for ships.

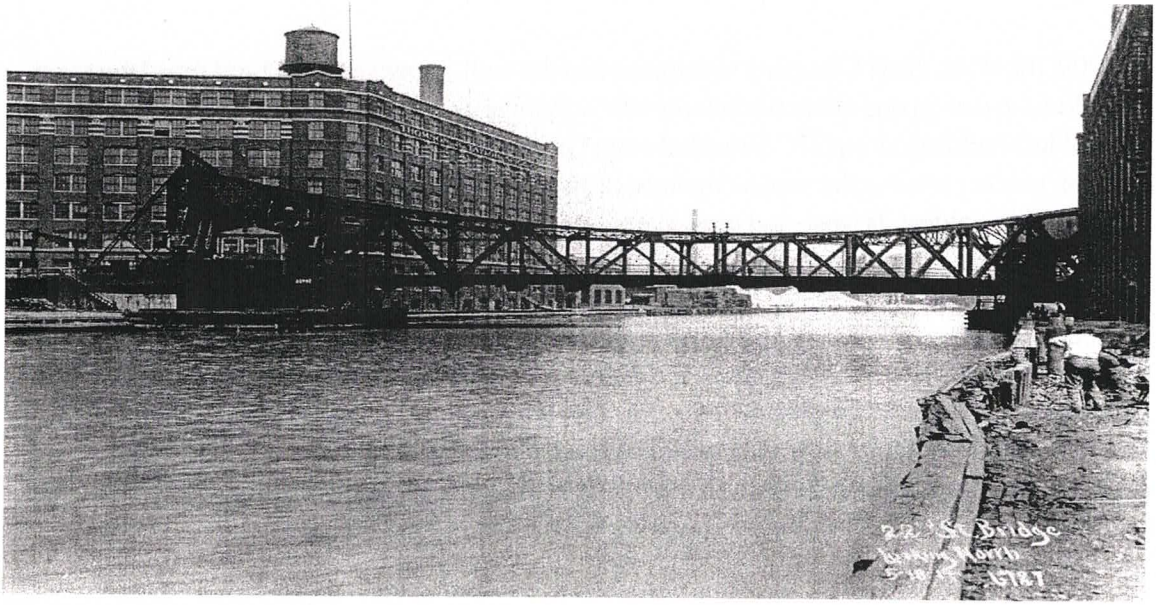
This early movable bridge type, an important predecessor to the trunnion bascule bridges that are a familiar sight on the Chicago River today, was designed by **William Scherzer (1858-1893)**. After graduating with a degree in engineering from the Polytechnicum in Zurich, Switzerland in 1880, Scherzer worked for the Keystone Bridge Company and the Carnegie Steel Company. His innovative bridge design was patented on December 26, 1893, five months after the inventor's untimely death. Rolling lift bridges were commercially developed by the Scherzer Rolling Lift Bridge Company under the direction of William's brother, Albert H. Scherzer. The Scherzer bothers' important contributions to the field of civil engineering field is evidenced by the rolling lift bridges built across the United States and in Canada, Russia and Argentina.

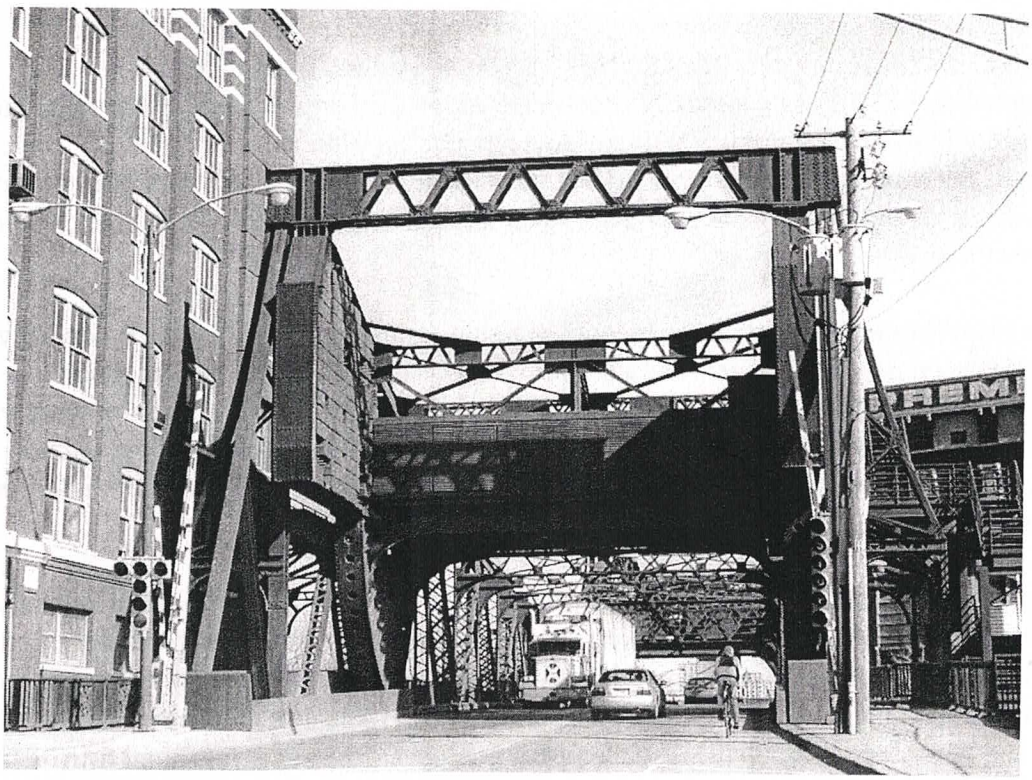
The first Scherzer Rolling Lift Bridge was constructed at Van Buren Street for the Metropolitan West Side Elevated Railway Company (a predecessor company of the Chicago Tansit Authority) in 1895, and it subsequently became the prototype for many of the Chicago River bridges erected during the early 1900s. The bridge consisted of two counter-balanced leaves which rolled back toward the banks and disappeared into massive foundations dug into each bank. The leaves were raised by gears that engage a drive rack at the rear of the span, forcing it downward. A total of eleven rolling lift bridges were constructed in Chicago from 1894 to 1907.

Construction of the Cermak Road Bridge began in 1904 and was completed in 1906 by the Sanitary District. It measures 60 feet in width and spans 216 feet. The Cermak Road Bridge features through trusses and overhead counterweights. While the design was considered to be highly efficient, it was also regarded as unattractive. Since the bridge was lower than most other bridges over the Chicago River, it was opened for boat traffic nearly ten times more than similar bridges; this heavy use resulted in its significant deterioration.

Improvements were undertaken in the 1960s when the bridge's wooden decking was replaced with metal grates. In 1998 the City of Chicago's Department of Transportation completed a

major rehabilitation of the bridge which included repairs to the leaves of the bridge and raising the structure 2.5 feet to provide additional clearance. Additionally, reconstruction of the bridge's substructure and original bridge houses was completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*.





Top: A historic view of the Cermak Road Bridge from 1917. The Thompson and Taylor Building is seen to the left.

Above: The Cermak Road Bridge as it appears today.

5. W. M. Hoyt Company Building
465 W. Cermak Road
Date: 1909
Architects: Nimmons & Fellows

In 1909, the W.M. Hoyt Company commissioned the well-known architectural firm Nimmons & Fellows to design one of the finest industrial buildings in the City—this five-story Prairie School loft building along 22nd Street between Grove Street and the Chicago River. The thriving grocery wholesaler was recognized in an 1894 publication entitled *Industrial Chicago* as, "one of the oldest, largest, and most successful of the great wholesale grocery houses in the West, and indeed, the country."

The company was founded in 1857 by a pioneer of Chicago commerce, **William M. Hoyt (1837-1925)**. William Hoyt was born in 1837 in New Haven, Vermont. His family relocated to Chicago when Hoyt was eighteen years old. Upon his arrival he worked as a clerk for a grocer. The following year the enterprising young man opened his own fruit store on State and Lake streets with just eighty-nine dollars. After the Civil War, Hoyt began acquiring other local produce companies and his company quickly became one of the largest and most successful wholesale grocers in Chicago.

By 1871, the W.M. Hoyt Company consisted of several stores and warehouses located throughout the Loop, however, all of the buildings burned in the Chicago Fire that year. Undaunted by the staggering losses, Hoyt traveled to New York immediately afterward to meet with his creditors. A biography of William Hoyt reports, "an editorial in the *New York Times* a few days later announced Mr. Hoyt as the first arrival from Chicago since the fire, and mentions the results of his successful conference with his creditors as insuring that Chicago pluck would be met with New York generosity."

William Hoyt immediately rebuilt a temporary warehouse on Canal Street and the following year the company constructed a warehouse and shop (demolished) on the site of what is now occupied by the London Guarantee Building (360 N. Michigan Avenue). Located at what was one of the best possible commercial sites in the newly rebuilt city, the Hoyt Building was not only in close proximity to railway facilities, but steamers also docked in front of the building on the Chicago River.

The business continued to thrive due, in part, to Hoyt's innovative advertising. The Company published flyers entitled "To the Housewife" which promoted many of its products and asked shoppers to "remember the brand"; additionally it circulated a weekly ad paper listing the company's "Current Price List," and by 1901 this reached 11,000 households on Chicago's North and West sides. In 1909 the Hoyt Company commissioned the architectural firm of Nimmons & Fellows to design a new headquarters for the company in the industrial district at 22nd Street and the Chicago River. Direct access to rail lines came into the warehouse on the first floor where both shipping and loading took place. General office space was situated on the building's second floor, storage on the third, and cold storage on the fourth floor. Coffee roasting, spice grinding and printing were preformed on the fifth floor.

TO THE HOUSEWIFE.

The "Housewife." That is a noble appellation of which every true woman should feel proud. It means that she is some man's—let us hope, some good man's—helpmate. To her is intrusted the management of the household. It is a duty that should be intelligently discharged. Every endeavor should be made to save the money that he is assiduously striving to gain. If she buys a thing that is unfit for use, that is so much money wasted. If she can buy something that is superior for the same money as she would pay for inferior goods, that is so much money saved. Our object in sending you this little phamplet is to help you choose the finest goods that can be procured in their several classes and which can be bought as cheaply as those that are not so good. You will find that by buying these goods you will be fulfilling your duty as a housewife. Study the names of these goods, ask for them, and do not be put off with things that the grocer will tell you are "just as good."

W. M. HOYT COMPANY,

We sell to Merchants only. Chicago. Ills.

Top: William Hoyt, a pioneer of Chicago commerce, founded his wholesale grocery company in 1857.

Left: Hoyt & Co. promoted its brands through the use of innovative advertisements including a weekly ad paper directed "To the Housewife."

Below: One of the finest industrial buildings in Chicago, the Hoyt Building was designed by the well-known architectural firm of Nimmons & Fellows. Today a canopy has been temporarily placed around the base of the building.

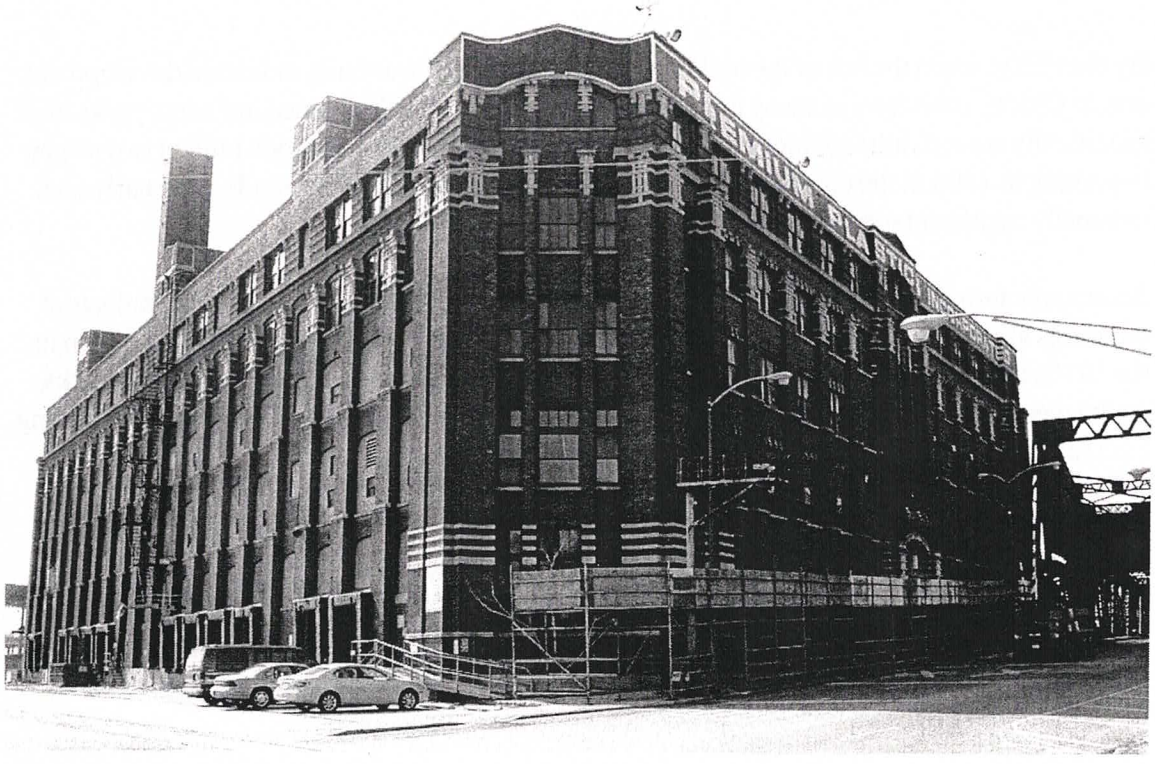
Located at the corner of Cermak Road and Grove Street, the long, symmetrical facade of the Hoyt Building combines dark red brick, limestone and terra-cotta detailing with an elegant and prominent, projecting entrance. Prairie School-influenced details are applied on the five-story building's functional form while projecting piers and recessed spandrels emphasize its simple Chicago School style. The horizontal banding at the first floor level, belt courses, flat ornamentation on the pier blocks and peaked parapets at the building's cornice reflect the Prairie School influence of its architects, Nimmons & Fellows.

In plan, the building is irregularly shaped, following the outline of its angular lot along the River. The principal facade faces Cermak Road to the north and features a main entrance which is set within a projecting portico at the central bay of the north facade. A terra-cotta entablature which sits atop a pair of Tuscan columns bears the name, "W.M. Hoyt Company." The finely detailed ornament continues on the east and west elevations of the building. Overall the building retains a high degree of integrity. Changes to the building are largely reversible in nature and include the infill of window openings predominately on the east and south facades. In 1916, a one story loading dock was added to the rear (south) elevation of the Hoyt Building. Constructed of concrete and common brick, this auxiliary structure is located outside the boundaries of the district.

Architects, **George Croll Nimmons (1867-1947)** and **William Kinne Fellows (1878-1948)**, working both alone and in partnership are credited with the designs of commercial and industrial buildings which were significant for their combination of Chicago School forms with Prairie and Sullivanesque-style detailing. The firm, Nimmons & Fellows (1897-1910), was well known for progressive large-scale industrial and commercial buildings, including the Sears, Roebuck and Company Administration Building (1905, 1914 addition, designated a Chicago Landmark in 2003) at 3333 W. Arthington Street, the Dixon Building (1908) and the Railway Terminal Building (1909). The industrial building for Willliam Hoyt was one of the last buildings designed by the firm.

After the partnership of Nimmons & Fellows dissolved in 1910, Fellows joined the firm of Hamilton, Fellows & Perkins, significant during the 1910s and 20s for their many Midwestern school buildings, while Nimmons went into solo practice under the firm name of George C. Nimmons & Co. (1910-1917). During the 1910s and 20s, Nimmons wrote a series of influential articles on progressive designs for modern industrial buildings for *Architectural Record* and the *American Architect*.

George C. Nimmons became nationally known for industrial buildings that combined practicality with visual elegance. He is also credited with the design of the warehouse and office building for one of Chicago's other leading wholesale grocers, the Reid, Murdoch & Company. The Reid Murdoch Building, located at 321 N. LaSalle Street, was constructed in 1914 and designated a Chicago Landmark in 1976.



Top: The five-story Prairie School loft building, located on Cermak Road between Grove Street and the South Branch of the Chicago River, visually anchors the eastern end of the Cermak Road Bridge District.

Left: Prairie School-influenced details in limestone are contrasted against dark red brick of the Hoyt Building's north and east facades.

Later History

By the 1920s, when the last of the buildings within the district was built, industrial development within Chicago was turning away from the Chicago River towards planned industrial parks built specifically around railroad lines. Chicago's Central Manufacturing District, built in two stages beginning in 1905 in the city's Bridgeport and McKinley Park neighborhoods, is an early and nationally significant example of such industrial development.

As manufacturing and wholesale companies moved to such industrial parks, existing industrial buildings along the Chicago River began to be abandoned or demolished. This trend began in the 1910s and '20s with the development of Union Station, with its adjacent riverfront tracks, on the western bank of the river's South Branch, followed by the Chicago Daily News Building, built just north of Union Station in 1929.

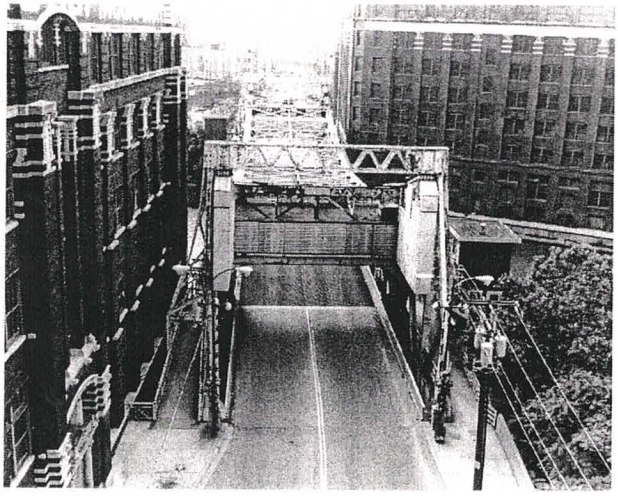
Especially in the post-World War II period, downtown industrial buildings along the Chicago River were replaced by office skyscrapers, including the Illinois Center complex east of Michigan Avenue, and residential highrises such as Marina City. Only two isolated warehouse buildings survive along the main branch of the Chicago River: the former Reid, Murdoch & Company Building (built in 1914) and the former Helene Curtis Company building at 325 N. Wells (built 1912), which previously housed a wholesale coffee company.

The North and South Branches of the river adjacent to downtown also retain a few industrial buildings. The former Montgomery Ward Warehouse complex, built in 1906-08 and 1930, centered on Chicago Avenue, and the former North American Cold Storage Company building (now Fulton House condominiums), built in 1908 at 345 N. Canal St., survive on the North Branch. On the South Branch stand the former Butler Brothers Warehouses at 111 and 165 N. Canal St. (built 1913 and 1922) and a 10-story industrial building at 329 W. 18th Street.

The conversion of some of these buildings to residential uses in the last two decades, however, has involved changes such as non-historic windows and the addition of projecting balconies, strongly lessening the remaining historic integrity. The Reid, Murdoch & Company Building, the original 1906-08 section of Montgomery Ward, both designated Chicago Landmarks, and the Butler Brothers Warehouse building at 111 N. Canal remain the best surviving downtown examples of the once vibrant industrial district along the river.

Three of the four buildings in the Cermak Road Bridge District (the W. H. Hoyt Company, the Thomson & Taylor Spice Company, and the Western Shade Cloth Company buildings), plus the Cermak Bridge itself, were individually color coded "orange" in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Together, the buildings in the Cermak Road Bridge District remain one of the most intact and significant groupings of industrial buildings along the Chicago River and are an important physical reminder of the importance of this part of Chicago's economic and architectural history.

Very few of the industrial buildings that once lined the banks of the Chicago River remain intact today. Some of the finest existing buildings include: the former Montgomery Ward Warehouse Complex (left), seen here in 1914; the riverfront precinct of the Cermak Road Bridge District (below); and the Reid Murdoch Building (bottom left), located at 321 N. LaSalle Street, seen here in 1928.



Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2 120 620 and 630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Cermak Road Bridge District be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

- The Cermak Road Bridge District is one of Chicago's most significant surviving groupings of early twentieth-century factories and warehouses along the Chicago River, the City's earliest industrial corridor and its most important during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- The Cermak Road Bridge District exemplifies Chicago's national importance as a historic center of commerce and industry and the significance that manufacturing and wholesale trades had in the City's economic history.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Cermak Road Bridge District is a distinguished group of early twentieth-century factories and warehouses, two building types of great significance in the history of Chicago.

- The buildings within the Cermak Road Bridge District are significant industrial examples of architectural styles of importance to Chicago architectural history, including Prairie, Chicago School, and Gothic Revival.

- The buildings in the Cermak Road Bridge District are distinguished by excellent craftsmanship and use of materials, including brick, stone, and terra cotta.

- The Cermak Road Bridge, located in the district, is last remaining double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge in operation in Chicago. Important for its significance in the field of engineering, this bridge type offered many advantages over the swing bridges that they replaced and was an important predecessor to bascule bridges.

Criterion 6: Distinctive Theme as a District

Its representation of an architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social , or other theme expressed through distinctive areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, or other objects that may or may not be contiguous.

- The buildings within the Cermak Road Bridge District display a distinct visual unity based on consistent building scale, setbacks, overall design, use of building materials and detailing.

- The district shares a common historic theme as a significant surviving cluster of early twentieth-century industrial buildings that exemplify the importance of the interaction of the Chicago River and railroads in the history of Chicago industry.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- The Cermak Road Bridge District's ensemble of large riverfront industrial buildings grouped around the city's sole-surviving double leaf Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge, give it a distinctive physical appearance, significant to both the immediate Near West neighborhood and to the City of Chicago.

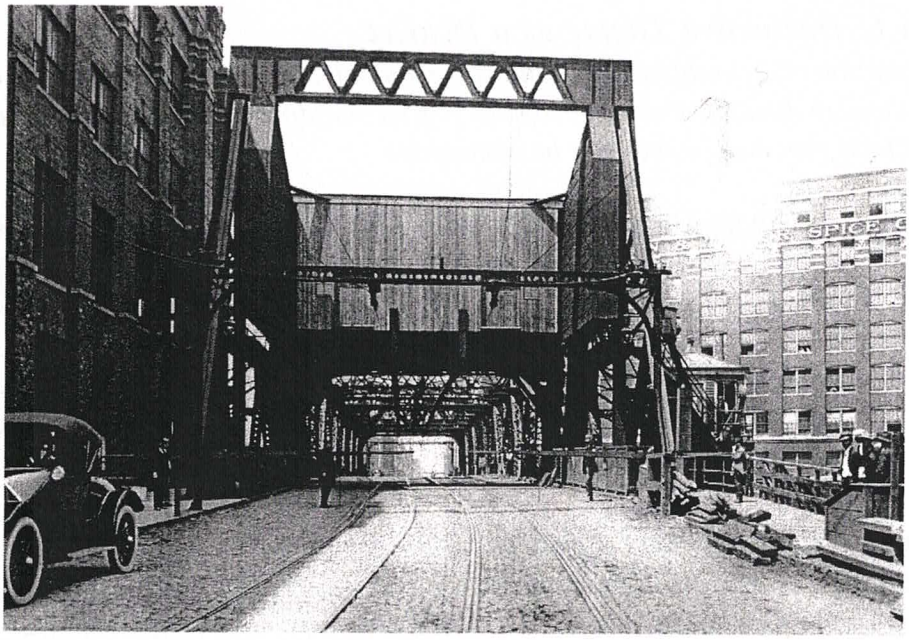
- The district's proximity to and visibility from the river, rail lines, and the expressway make it an important and familiar sight to many passing through the area.

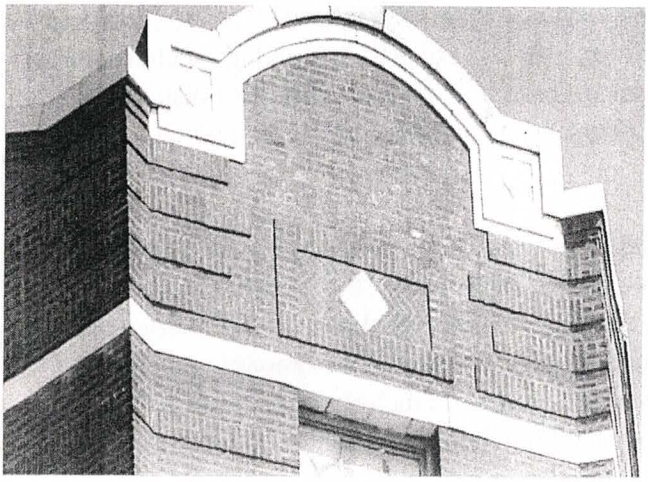
Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The Cermak Road Bridge District possesses good integrity in both its overall streetscapes and its individual structures, including the Cermak Road Bridge and the four buildings included in the district. The district's buildings retain the physical characteristics that define their historic significance. These include brick walls and limestone and terra-cotta trim used for window and door details.

The most common changes to individual buildings are largely reversible in nature. Upper-floor windows may have altered sash configurations and been bricked-in, but original window openings remain, and replacement sash could replicate historic windows. Additionally, three of buildings in the district, the W.M. Hoyt Company, the Western Shade Company, and the Wendnagel Warehouse, have been expanded over the years to include rear additions that are not historically significant. In each case, the district boundaries only include that portion of the





Top: A view of the Cermak Road Bridge District in 1914.

Center: This contemporary view of the district illustrates its distinct visual unity, consistent building scale and high degree of integrity.

Left: A detail from the Thomson & Taylor Building exemplifies the fine craftsmanship and use of materials that distinguishes the district's simple industrial buildings.

building which has been deemed historically or architecturally significant for the purposes of this designation.

The Cermak Road Bridge was sensitively rehabilitated in 1998, retaining its historic visual character, overall historic structural forms, and its historic relationship to Cermak Road itself and the buildings flanking the bridge.

The overall sense of historic place remains along these blocks of Cermak within the proposed district. In general, historic building lot sizes and building placement have respected the historic character of the streets. The district's streetscapes provide an important sense of historic "place" when seen as a whole. The physical character of individual buildings in terms of scale, setback from streets, and general configuration of door and window openings have remained consistent and work together to provide the viewer with a strong sense of the historic overall character of the streetscapes. In addition, the historic relationship of the Cermak streetscape as a whole with the Cermak Road Bridge remains.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Cermak Road Bridge District, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- all exterior elevations, including rooflines, visible from the public rights-of-way.

Address Ranges

463-487 W. Cermak Rd.	(odds)
500-620 W. Cermak Rd.	(evens)
2200-2222 S. Grove St.	(evens)
2115-2143 S. Jefferson St.	(odds)
2130-2146 S. Jefferson St.	(evens)
2113-2149 S. Lumber St.	(odds)
2114-2146 S. Lumber St.	(evens)

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From *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*: p.5.
From *Chicago and Its Makers*: p.7 (top, center).
From *Chicago at the Turn of the Century in Photographs*: p.7 (bottom).
From *Chicago Central Business and Office Building Directory, 1909*: p.13 (top).
Chicago Historical Society: pp.15 (top) and 21 (top left, right).
From *The Graphic*: p.17 (bottom).

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